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NSC BRIEFING

5 OCTOBER 1955

DEATH OF GREEK PRIME MINISTER PAPAGOS

- I. The death of Prime Minister Papagos will hasten development of the serious political crisis in Greece, which has been building up during the past year.
  - A. His death occurs at a particularly difficult time, while Greek passions are inflamed over the Cyprus issue.
  - B. Foreign Minister Stephanopolous is considered the most likely of several candidates to head a provisional government.
- II. Greek law provides for national elections within 45 days after establishment of such a provisional government.
  - A. While King Paul and his political advisors may manage to postpone the required elections for a few months, the period of a relatively stable Greek government (such as was inaugurated under Papagos in 1952) is past.
- III. The Rally Party, created by Papagos with the collaboration of various politicians and political factions, has suffered from internal strife and defection during the past 18 months.
  - A. As the ailing prime minister became less active, these trends became more pronounced.
  - B. His death makes certain that the Rally Party will have disintegrated by the time national elections are held.

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IV. Despite King Paul's interest in promoting political groupings which will give Greece a stable, Western-oriented government, a return to Greek coalition governments--based on splinter party alignments--appears inevitable.

A. If the present climate of popular frustration and irritation continues to election day, an unstable coalition government, containing strong leftist and neutralist influence, will be the most likely result.